

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Final Office Action dated June 6, 2003 (Paper No. 9) has been carefully reviewed, and these remarks are responsive thereto. Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment, reconsideration of this application, as amended, and allowance of the application.

Claims 1-49 remain pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the first and second formaldehyde scavengers are selected from the group consisting of melamine, urea, guanidine, and ammonium hydroxide. Support for this amendment is evident from claim 1 as originally filed. Claims 2-49 remain in their previous form. No new matter is included in this Amendment, and no additional claim fees are due as a result of this Amendment.

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 25-49 contain patentable subject matter. These claims stand in condition for allowance.

The Office rejected claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and/or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on LeBlanc, U.S. Patent No. 3,444,119 (hereinafter "LeBlanc"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request its reconsideration.

Applicants' claim 1 recites a method of making a modified phenol-formaldehyde resole resin. This method includes: combining phenol, formaldehyde, water, and a base catalyst to form a mixture; reacting the mixture to produce a reaction mixture containing at least a phenol-formaldehyde reaction product and free formaldehyde; combining first and second formaldehyde scavengers and the reaction mixture, wherein the formaldehyde scavengers include members selected from the group consisting of melamine, urea, guanidine, and ammonium hydroxide; and reacting the reaction mixture and the formaldehyde scavengers to form an infinitely water-soluble, modified phenol-formaldehyde resole resin.

Nothing in LeBlanc teaches or suggests production of a modified phenol-formaldehyde resole resin including at least two formaldehyde scavengers selected from the group of melamine, urea, guanidine, and ammonium hydroxide. Rather, in LeBlanc, when combinations of formaldehyde scavenging agents are used, one of the scavengers must be dicyandiamide. Note, for example, LeBlanc at column 2, lines 18-19; column 2, lines 30-32; column 3, line 28 through column 4, line 17; and Examples I and II. Nothing in LeBlanc teaches or remotely suggests production of an infinitely water soluble, modified phenol-formaldehyde resin in which a combination of formaldehyde scavengers selected from the group of melamine, urea, guanidine, and ammonium hydroxide is used (Applicants' claims do not exclude the presence of dicyandiamine provided two of the listed formaldehyde scavengers are included).

Regarding claim 3, Applicants further submit that nothing in LeBlanc teaches or suggests adding an organic acid or a precursor thereof to the reaction mixture, as further recited in this claim. Regarding claims 6-7, Applicants respectfully submit that nothing in LeBlanc teaches or suggests mixing a latent acid catalyst with the modified phenol-formaldehyde resole resin, as further recited in these claims, and further, that nothing in LeBlanc teaches or suggests a binder containing such a latent acid catalyst, as further recited in claim 8.

Accordingly, in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims patentably distinguish from LeBlanc. Withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of claims 1-24 are earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment because it is believed that this Amendment places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Moreover, entry of this Amendment is appropriate because it gives Applicants an opportunity to respond to the new grounds of rejection, based on newly cited art, first raised in the Final Office Action.

Applicants believe that no fee is required for this submission. However, if any fees are required, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, or if an extension of time is necessary that is not accounted for in the papers filed with this Amendment, the Commissioner is authorized to debit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733 for any necessary fees, including any necessary extension fees.

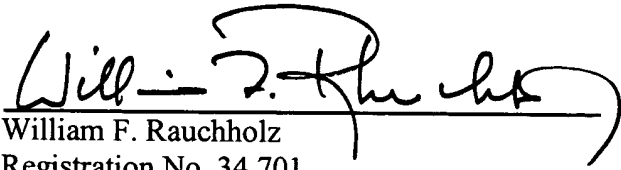
All rejections having been addressed, Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully solicits prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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